

Message Text

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45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 NEA-10

GAC-01 TRSE-00 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 OMB-01 ACDA-19 IO-12

RSR-01 /140 W

----- 053527

R 140905 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7528

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDELMC

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 2642

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MARR, BE

SUBJ: BELGIAN DEFENSE REFORMS

REF: BRUSSELS 2521 AND A-109

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE ON MAY 8, MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS ANNOUNCED THAT A GOVERNMENT DECISION ON ALL DEFENSE REFORM PROPOSALS BEARING ON MILITARY SERVICE OBLIGATION WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1974. AFFECTED MEASURES ARE (A) REDUCTIONS IN TERMS OF SERVICE FOR CONSCRIPTS, (B) ELIMINATION OF DEFERMENTS, (C) LIMITATION TO ONE SERVICE PER FAMILY, (D) IMPOSITION OF A TAX ON INDIVIDUALS DEFERRED, AND (E) ASSIGNMENT OF ONE THOUSAND CONSCRIPTS PER YEAR TO THE GENDARMERIE. VANDEN BOEYNANTS SAID OTHER REFORM PROPOSALS UNCLASSIFIED

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WILL BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED BY THE END OF 1975.

2. OF THE CONTROVERSIAL MEASURES AWAITING DECISION, VANDEN BOEYNANTS SAID THE OBJECTIVE IS TO MAINTAIN OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVE INTERIOR DEFENSE WITHOUT INCREASING THE BUDGET BY MORE THAN THE PLEDGED ANNUAL INCREASE IN REAL TERMS OF FOUR PERCENT. IF REDUCTIONS IN TERMS OF SERVICE ARE DESIRED, HE SAID, INEXPENSIVE COMPENSATORY MEASURES MUST BE ACCEPTED.

3. VANDEN BOEYNANTS STRESSED THAT NEITHER THE REFORMS BEING IMPLEMENTED NOR THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED WILL BE PERMITTED TO INTERFERE WITH BELGIUM' S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS OR UNDERCUT BELGIAN AND ALLIED OBJECTIVES IN MBFR.

4. REMAINDER OF PRESS CONFERENCE DEVOTED TO DESCRIPTION OF REFORMS UNDERWAY, PRINCIPALLY ROTATION OF TROOPS FROM GERMANY ACCOMPANIED BY A STRENGTHENING OF BELGIAN FORCES EAST OF THE RHINE, INTERNAL REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES STRUCTURE, AND ASSIGNMENT OF A LARGER ROLE TO THE GENDARMERIE FOR DEFENSE OF THE INTERIOR. STRAUZ- HUPE

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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